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Ban Ard

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Witcher TTRPG Homebrew Collection

Aretuza breeds politicians who hide daggers behind silk fans. Ban Ard breeds artillery. We don't teach the boys to whisper in the ears of kings; we teach them to blow the castle doors off their hinges." — Former Instructor of Ban Ard

The Academy of Ban Ard resides in the city of the same name, in the kingdom of Kaedwen. The school stands just outside the city proper as an imposing, stone-built structure. Unlike the highly cloistered girls' academy of Aretuza, the exclusively male students of Ban Ard are not sequestered from the outside world.

The school is deeply influenced by the uncouth energy and strength of personality of Kaedwen, a nation constantly in conflict with its neighbors and its harsh climate.

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Atmosphere & Rules of the Region

The atmosphere in Ban Ard is highly militaristic, raucous, and heavily focused on practical combat. Older boys find great amusement in drinking, socializing, and taking in all the sights and pleasures that the city can offer.

Operating within Ban Ard means navigating a very different set of rules compared to other academies:

- **The "Boys Will Be Boys" Doctrine:** The academy encourages a lack of discipline to a point. While petty theft is looked upon very severely, outraging public decency after successful exams is generally tolerated.
- **Combative Focus:** Ban Ard students are positively encouraged to train their combative and militaristic sides along with their magical talent. Academic topics are important, but the boys do not face the constant academic pressure found in Aretuza.
- **The Secret Societies:** In addition to their classes, Ban Ard houses clubs and secret societies where the wealthy boys can make connections that may prove profitable long after they leave the school.

Layout & Locations

The Academy and the surrounding city blend together, as students freely roam the streets.

- **The Stone Academy:** An imposing, stone-built structure just outside the city proper. It houses the main lecture halls, combat training grounds, and dormitories.
- **The City Taverns:** Because students are not cloistered, the local taverns and brothels in the city of Ban Ard serve as unofficial gathering places for

older students looking to spend their families' coin.
- **The Secret Lodges:** Hidden basements and locked rooms throughout the city where the wealthy sons of nobility hold their secret society meetings to forge lifelong political and business connections.

Prices & Services

High fees and a preference for boys of noble families make for classes full of the sons of the wealthy. However, the school also acts as a mercenary broker for its advanced adepts.

Academy Administration & Internships

Advanced students take time to engage in monster hunts or even mercenary contracts to develop their skills.

Item / Service	Type	Cost	Description
Annual Tuition	Service	1,000+ Crowns	High fees required for attendance, usually paid by wealthy noble families.
Mercenary Internship	Contract	Variable	Students take contracts for minor nobles or town councils; the Academy takes a cut of any fees they receive.
Monster Hunt Internship	Contract	Variable	Students are dispatched into the Kaedweni forests to hunt beasts, with the school taking a percentage of the bounty.

Key Personnel

- **Dorregaray of Vole:** Promoted to Rector of the Ban Ard school following the Thanedd coup. He is considered an odd fit, as he is obsessed with

endangered species and is known to constantly decry the over-harvesting of animals. He has the advantage of not being too threatening to the Northern kings.
- **Bronwyn Deadeye (Notable Alumni):** The one and only Ban Ard-trained sorceress. Assigned male at birth, she attended Ban Ard and later transitioned using magic and alchemy. She is a master of air magic (creating *Bronwyn's Gust* and *Bronwyn's Bow*) and currently operates as a devastatingly effective pirate raiding Nilfgaardian ships.

The Academy Staff

Running Ban Ard requires wrangling hundreds of highly destructive, wealthy young men.

Personnel	Role	Primary Function
Dorregaray of Vole	Rector	Oversees the academy; attempts to focus the boys on natural preservation rather than pure destruction.
Master of Evocation	Senior Faculty	Teaches destructive, combat-focused magic and artillery applications.
Quartermaster	Administration	Brokers the mercenary and monster-hunting contracts for the students, ensuring the school gets its cut.
The City Watch Liasion	Security	Bails students out of local jails for public decency charges, while ensuring thieves are expelled.

The Scholastic Tracking System

Ban Ard is famous for its high drop-out rate.

- **The Drop-Out Economy:** There is a much higher rate of Ban Ard students

failing to complete their studies compared to Aretuza.
- **Mundane Success:** A poorly trained sorcerer who drops out can still find success in a mundane occupation and charge a premium for their services, as they are not expected to face fully trained mages.
- **Agent of the State:** In the years before the Winter War, the Kaedweni Secret Service commonly employed dropouts from Ban Ard. These partially trained mages were turned into "super human" agents of the state.

Module Events Table

Use these hooks to drive a Ban Ard-focused narrative.

Roll (1d6)	Event Hook	Description
1-2	**The Secret Society**	A wealthy student invites the party to secure contraband for a secret society initiation ritual.
3-4	**The Internship Gone Wrong**	A group of students took a monster hunting contract as an internship but bit off more than they could chew. The Academy hires the party to rescue them quietly.
5	**The State Agent**	A student who recently failed his exams is being heavily recruited by the Kaedweni Secret Service to become a state operative. He begs the party to help him flee the city.
6	**The Tavern Brawl**	Older boys heavily socializing and drinking in town start a massive magical tavern brawl that threatens to burn down a city block.

The Library

Ban Ard's library focuses less on high-court manipulation and more on practical, combative, and destructive magical theories.

Standard Academic Texts (Stable)

- **"The Artillery of Chaos"**
    - *Description:* A foundational text on utilizing Evocation magic on the battlefield, specifically focusing on Kaedweni military tactics.
    - *Utility:* Grants a **+2 bonus to Spell Casting** when utilizing fire or earth magic in mass-combat scenarios.

Restricted Academic Texts (Dangerous Knowledge)

- **"Deadeye's Ballistics"**
    - *Description:* A copy of notes left behind by the infamous pirate Bronwyn Deadeye. It details the manipulation of powerful air currents to propel weaponry.
    - *Utility:* Enables the reader to learn the *Bronwyn's Bow* spell, which allows the caster to throw weapons or bombs with devastating force.

Rumors & Plot Hooks

The Secret Service Conscription

The Kaedweni Secret Service is secretly destabilizing the exam process for mid-level students. By artificially increasing the drop-out rate, the state is creating a desperate pool of partially-trained mages to recruit as "super human" black-ops agents. A sympathetic instructor has noticed the tampered test scores and wants the players to break into the administration wing to find the proof.

The Stolen Cut

A group of advanced students successfully completed a highly dangerous mercenary contract but refused to give the Academy its mandatory cut of the fees. The students have barricaded themselves in one of the city's secret society lodges. The Quartermaster hires the party to breach the lodge, subdue the students, and extract the school's gold without alerting the city watch.

Dorregaray's Menagerie

Rector Dorregaray of Vole is utilizing school funds to secretly house and protect

several highly dangerous, endangered draconids in the academy's subterranean vaults. When one of the beasts escapes and begins hunting drunken students in the city streets at night, the Rector hires the players to capture the beast alive, terrified that if the Kaedweni military finds out, they will slaughter his prized specimens.

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Activity: The "Rookery" Mercantile

Ban Ard is a city of magic and military tension. The students are wealthy, unsupervised, and constantly looking for ways to bypass their studies.

- **The Loop:** Players act as smugglers or "fixers" for the Ban Ard students.
- **The Activity:** Acquire forbidden contraband (high-end liquor, illicit scrolls, or tavern delicacies) and navigate the city guard or academy Mistresses to deliver them to the "Secret Lodges".
- **The Hook:** A wealthy student offers a massive bounty to secure a *True Staff of Binding* diagram so he can practice goetia in secret—but the item is currently held by the city's Witch Hunters.

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